



*Workmen lay granite slabs in constructing the exterior of the wings.*



## *About the History of Idaho's Capitol*

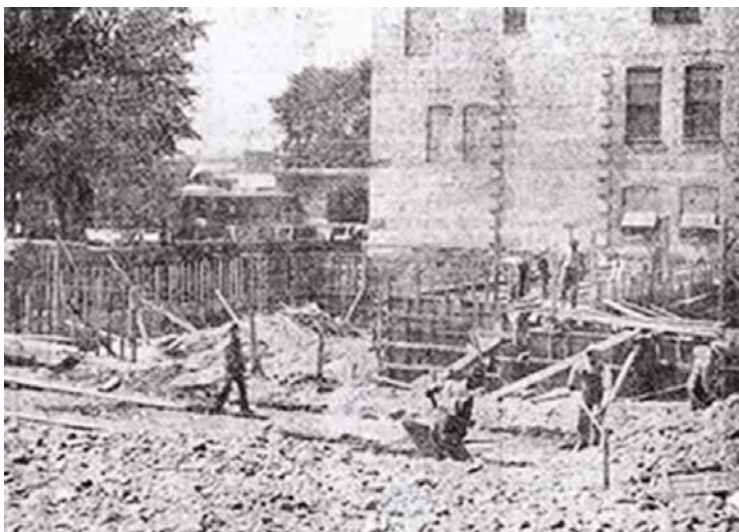
### **Phase Two: The East and West Wings (1919-1921)**

Planning for the construction of the east and west wings did not commence until seven years following the completion of the central portion. In February 1919, a bill was introduced in the Idaho State Legislature proposing an allocation of \$900,000 for the purpose of constructing the wings. Proponents of this action argued the additional office space and facilities were seriously needed and the construction effort would provide jobs for the service men returning to Idaho after World War I.<sup>147</sup> By March 8, both the House of Representatives and the Senate had approved the bill and designated all work on the wings take place under the supervision of William J. Hall, the Commissioner of the State Department of Public Works.<sup>148</sup> It was decided that a bond election would be held on May 10, 1919 to determine if land could be purchased to expand the Capitol building grounds. Only Boise property owners were eligible to vote on the proposed acquisition of the block between Sixth and Seventh Streets in front, or south, of the Capitol, together with the Collister Flats in the block between Seventh and Eighth Streets, also to the south. This addition would add approximately two square blocks to the Capitol grounds.<sup>149</sup> On the day of the election, an unprecedented turn-out of 2,970 voters approved the bond, voting 99 percent in favor of the purchase.<sup>150</sup> A celebration ensued, amidst a frenzy of parades, marching bands and speech-making supporting the civic growth of Boise.<sup>151</sup> In preparation for construction, the red brick Territorial Capitol was torn down, of which the cornerstone could not be found, causing some concern in local press.<sup>152</sup> In addition, the Central School was demolished to make room for the east and west wings.<sup>153</sup>

As intended during the construction of the central portion, the east and west walls of the abbreviated-wings were built as temporary walls and were removed as the construction of the wings proceeded. Construction commenced with the lowest bidder, James Stewart & Company, of Salt Lake City, Utah, being chosen both as the general contractor and supplier of the granite to be used in the foundations.<sup>154</sup> The contract for the construction of the foundation was let to the Morrison-Knudson Company of Boise.<sup>155</sup> Photographs printed in The Statesman on September 7, 1919, show finished concrete foundations in place for the west wing and the progressing excavation of the east wing.<sup>156</sup> Bids were opened on September 8, 1919 for the contracts for additional construction, wiring, plumbing and heating.<sup>157</sup> After bids had been received for the steelwork, Commissioner Hall decided that the state did not have enough funds to use steel for the vertical structural columns in the wings and indicated concrete would be substituted to reduce costs.<sup>158</sup> Construction started on October 15, 1919 with the pouring of concrete columns commencing in the basement.<sup>159</sup>

On March 6, 1920, Commissioner Hall announced the award of three contracts for the furnishings of the wings.<sup>160</sup> Consistent with the central portion, mahogany furniture was

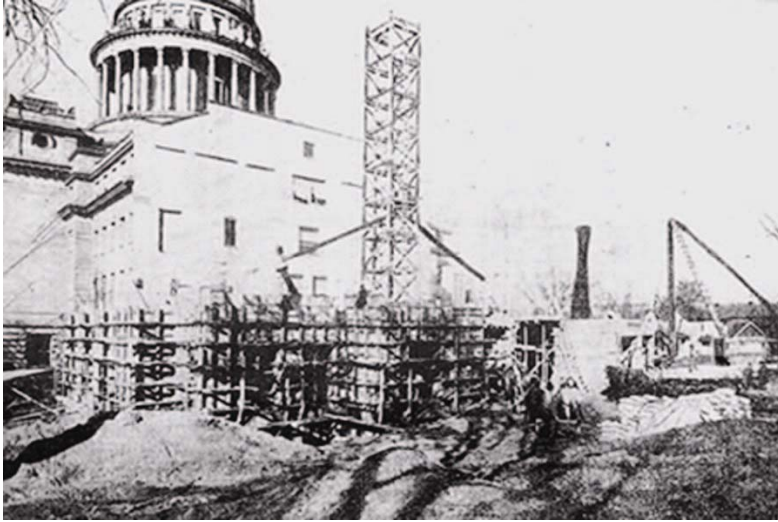
specified, although Wolleager was not awarded the contract, which instead went to Hine Desk & Furniture of Denver, Colorado. Once again, the Art Metal Company was hired for metal furniture and equipment, such as safe deposit boxes. A local firm, Allen-Wright Furniture supplied the carpets, shades and draperies.<sup>161</sup> Approximately half of the sandstone used for the wings had been quarried and delivered by the beginning of April. On July 19, 1920, Tourtellotte announced that the west wing, with the exception of the Governor's Office and Senate Chamber, would be ready for occupation by August 1.<sup>162</sup> By September 1920, both wings were nearly complete and ready for occupancy.<sup>163</sup> All occupants were finally settled into the new wings on November 20. The Idaho Daily Statesman reported that several of the state officers were personalizing their spaces, "hanging pictures to add to the attractiveness of the rooms."<sup>164</sup>



*During the autumn of 1919, The Idaho Daily Statesman reported on the progress of the excavation of the new wings. Trenches and forms for setting the foundation of the east wing are pictured in this photo.*

The completed building was formally dedicated on January 3, 1921, at an open house to which all citizens of Idaho were invited. A ceremony was held on the front steps of the Capitol, after which, visitors could wander freely through the offices and chambers of the building to inspect the facilities. A formal dance was held later in the evening with music provided by the Boise Municipal Band and punch served by local high school girls. An estimated 6,000 people attended the event, visiting from throughout the state.<sup>165</sup> Within a few days, the legislative bodies were conducting their first sessions in the Senate and House chambers. As the wings began to be used, the functionality of Tourtellotte's design was put to the test. After their first session, the legislators complained of poor acoustics in both the Senate and House chambers. In these spaces, the speaker could not be heard, but conversations in the adjacent corridors carried into the main chambers.<sup>166</sup> Mr. Hall, the Commissioner of Public Works and the architects were immediately notified<sup>167</sup> and responded by hanging white canvas curtains to enclose the chambers.<sup>168</sup>

According to Tourtellotte & Hummel's 1919 drawings, the exterior walls of the east and west wings were constructed of the same materials as those of the central portion. Again, a base course of granite with sandstone above sheaths the brick masonry walls. Solid sandstone columns in a tetrastyle arrangement adorn the recesses at the three sides of each wing. The steps and landings at the east and west entrances are specified on the drawings to be "granolithic." Tourtellotte & Hummel indicated, in their 1919 drawings, that the flat portions of roof on the east and west wings were to be surfaced with "asbestos roof felt in mastic." On the saucer domes of each wing, from the base to the apex, the roofing materials were specified as follows: a terracotta base, a ring of glazed skylights and a final cap of copper. The skylights and clerestory windows allow for natural light to enter into the House and Senate chambers below.



*The exterior east wall of the central portion can be seen behind the construction of the new east wing. This was eventually removed to connect the two parts of the building.*

The exterior of the east and west wings adhere to a symmetry of massing and plan. Like the central portion, the granite base course supports the five courses of rusticated sandstone, rounded in shape, and stacked to resemble logs. A breaking entablature collars the building between the transoms of the third and fourth story windows. Ornamented with a dentilled cornice, this band weights the upper floors imparting a horizontal authority to balance the vertical thrust of the dome. Signifying a hierarchy of form, the

four-column colonnade is repeated around the building's wings, in Ionic and Doric styles rather than the more highly embellished Corinthian style used on the principle façade and dome. The fourth story is capped with a simple cornice and unadorned parapet.

The fenestration of the east and west wings has the same hierarchy of size as the central portion, although the individual windows are more widely spaced to accommodate the colonnade on each face of the wings. Entrances to both the east and west wings are smaller in scale than the southern Jefferson Street approach with stone stairs and Ionic colonnades framing double doors on the second floor. A porte-cochere beneath each grand stair and landing offers access to the first floor. Saucer domes cap both wings allowing light to enter the legislative chambers below through skylights and a ring of plate glass windows.

Following the second phase of construction, the Capitol's interior east/west axis was extended substantially in both directions, establishing a corridor, either flanked by office suites or terminating, on the upper two floors, with the Senate and House Chambers. The basement of the west wing initially housed offices for the State Historical Society, on the south side, and on the north side, the Adjunct General, the G.A.R. and the State Constabulary.

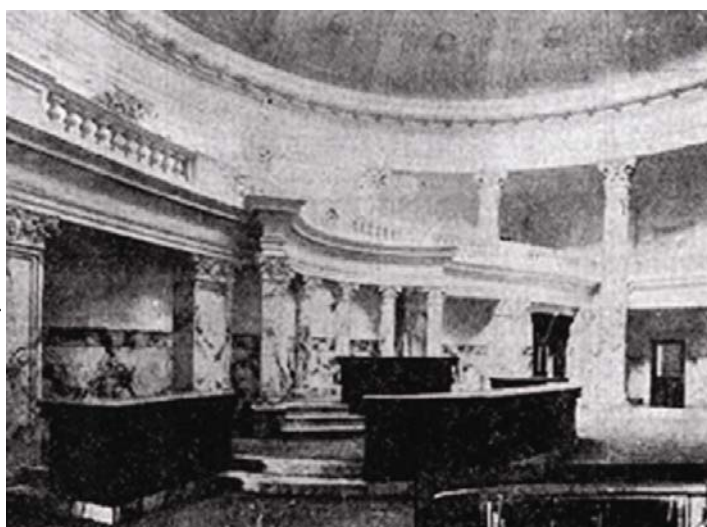
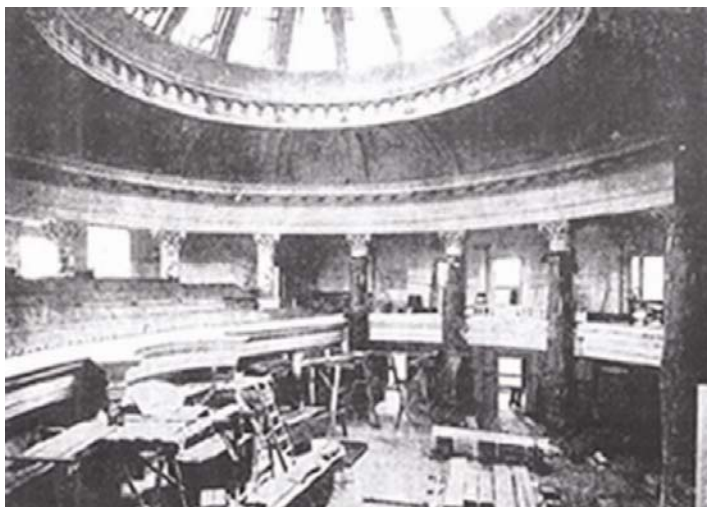
The University Extension was located in the basement of the east wing. The Department of Agriculture, Department of Immigration-Labor and Statistics, the State Treasurer's Reception Area, Department of Finance, Department of Public Lands and the Department of Public Investments occupied the first floor of the east and west wings. The second floor consisted mainly of state facility and resource departments with the largest suite of offices occupied by the Governor and his staff. The two legislative chambers, accompanied by retiring rooms, at the extreme east and west ends, dominate both wings on the third floor. Surrounding each of these spaces, smaller rooms were to be "variously used, as for President, Speaker, Chief Clerks or for unassigned purposes at present, but to be used later for different Boards, Commissions, Inspectors, etc."<sup>169</sup> The domed ceilings of the semi-circular Senate and House Chambers expanded into the fourth floor where public viewing galleries overlook the chambers. Like the third floor, smaller office spaces skirt the Chambers on the fourth floor, housing the



Departments of Public Utilities and Public Welfare.

### **Installation of Interior Architecture and Finishes**

Drawings indicate that the 1919-1920 building expansion precipitated space allocation changes from those established for the central portion. The rotunda basement was divided by partitions and designated as exhibition and storage space. The State Historical Society was moved from the first floor to the basement's newly constructed west wing, and the Historical Society's former space was divided and assigned to the Chief Clerk and Auditor. Comparing the 1911 and 1920 floor plans, the State Library and internal staircase west of the rotunda were removed. The vacant space was divided and converted into office space on both the first and second floors. To the east of the rotunda on the first floor, the Land Department was replaced by the Treasurer's Suite. Except for the Library, space use on the second floor remained intact after the second construction phase. No changes were made on the third floor of the central portion, although on the fourth floor, west and east Committee Rooms were enlarged; the west room being converted into a large office for the department of Public Welfare and Vital Statistics.<sup>170</sup>



*Interior finishes in the Senate Chamber were being installed in the summer of 1920 (above). By October, the podium and the colonnade behind were nearly complete (below).*

The central east/west corridors are sheathed in reflective surfaces predominately of white marble and white plaster, which reflect light throughout the building's interior. In addition to flooring intended to match that of the central portion, wainscoting and wall trim in the corridors of the east and west wings were to be of marble comparable to the central portion. Highly finished semi-public spaces in the wings included the House of Representatives Chamber on the third floor of the east wing, the Senate Chamber on the third floor of the west wing and the Governor's Reception Room on the second floor of the same wing. The use of skylights, courses of electric lights and the distinctive Corinthian capitals thematically unite these spaces with the rotunda. Like the columns in the rotunda, those in both the Senate and House Chambers have scagliola shafts, marble plinths and Corinthian capitals. Both chambers have coffered plaster ceilings. Marble stones "chosen for their quality and beauty of markings" were to be used for the desks and counters for the clerks, reporters and presiding officers in the

Senate and House Chambers.<sup>171</sup>

**Footnotes:**

<sup>147</sup> “Capitol Wings to be Completed for \$900,000,” *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, 5 February 1919.

<sup>148</sup> “Vote \$900,000 for Completion of State House,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Sunday, 2 March 1919; “Senate, 23 to 17, for Completion of State House,” *The Idaho Statesman*, 8 March 1919 and “Idaho Figures \$21,686 Higher Than Utah’s Bid,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Friday, 1 August 1919.

<sup>149</sup> “Vote on \$135,000 City Bond Issue Saturday, May 10,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Thursday 3 April 1919, 4.

<sup>150</sup> “Boise Votes 99 Percent for Progress,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Sunday, 11 May 1919, 1.

<sup>151</sup> “\$135,000 Bond Sweeps Boise by 2929 to 41,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Sunday, 11 May 1919, 1.

<sup>152</sup> “No Corner Stone at Capitol Annex,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Thursday, 24 July 1919.

<sup>153, 159, 163</sup> Hauck, Eldon, *American Capitols: An Encyclopedia of the State, National and Territorial Capitol Edifices of the United States*, vol. 1 (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1991) 55.

<sup>154</sup> “Idaho Figures \$21,686 Higher Than Utah’s Bid,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Friday, 1 August 1919.

<sup>155</sup> “Work on Idaho Capitol Differs from that on Solomon’s Temple,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Sunday, 30 November 1919, 3.

<sup>156</sup> *The Idaho Statesman*, 7 September 1919.

<sup>157</sup> “Will Open Bids on Capitol Wing Work,” *The Idaho Statesman*, 16 August 1919.

<sup>158</sup> “Steel Too High for Capitol Use,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Saturday 16 August 1919

<sup>160, 161</sup> “Capitol Furniture Will Cost \$42,000,” *The Idaho Statesman*, 6 March 1920.

<sup>162</sup> “State Capitol Wing is Ready,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Wednesday, 21 July 1920, 3.

<sup>164</sup> “State Officers Finish Moving,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Saturday, Saturday, 20 November 1920, 5.

<sup>165</sup> “Large Crowds Greet Idaho’s State Officers,” *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, Tuesday, 4 January 1921, 1,5.

<sup>166, 167</sup> “Acoustics Poor in Both Houses,” *The Idaho Statesman*, 6 January 1921, 3.

<sup>168</sup> “Hang Curtains to Improve Acoustics of New Chambers,” *The Idaho Statesman*, Friday, 7 January 1921.

<sup>169</sup> Area of Rooms in Idaho State Capitol, Idaho State Capitol Commission Papers, collection AR 18, box 5 (Boise: Idaho State Historical Society) 4.

<sup>170</sup> Tourtellotte & Hummel Drawings, Sheets No. 1E-5E, 14 August 1919, Idaho State Capitol Drawings.

<sup>171</sup> Quality and Kinds of Marble, Idaho State Capitol Commission Papers, collection AR 18, box 5 (Boise: Idaho State Historical Society).